USING MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING & BYSTANDER INTERVENTION TO PREVENT SEXUAL ASSAULT IN HIGH- RISK DRINKING SITUATIONS IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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Scope of the Problem: Alcohol-Involved Sexual Assault

Alcohol and Sexual Assault in College

□ 1 in 5 U.S. college women experiences sexual assault

　□ Approx1/2 of involve alcohol (Testa & Livingston, 2009).

□ Campus-based assaults occur predominantly in social settings:

　□ Where others are present (Koelsch et al., 2012)

　　■ Friends in social group (Blayney & Read, 2016)

　□ With perpetrators known to the victim

　□ Sometimes in experiences that may start out as consensual

1 IN 5 WOMEN
IS A TARGET OF SEXUAL ASSAULT WHILE IN COLLEGE.

JUST BECAUSE SHE ISN'T SAYING NO...

DOESN'T MEAN SHE'S SAYING YES.

sex without consent = sexual assault
DON'T BE THAT GUY.

The Interpersonal Context of ASA

□ Essence of assault risk is highly interpersonal

□ Our own studies of trauma/PTSD- frequent mention of friends

□ Social-interpersonal concerns, priorities contribute to alcohol-related assault risk (Livingston et al., 2004; Yeater, 2010).

  ❑ Tension between avoiding assault risk, maintaining social relationships that are part of the risk context (Livingston et al., 2004).

   ◼ What Norris (1997) describes as the "tightrope" that women walk.

  ❑ Evident in preliminary data (focus groups; N=68; Blayney et al.; 2018; Read et al., 2018)

   ◼ Interpersonal concerns identified in nearly 70% of the groups.

     ◼ Mentions of the role of friends
     ◼ Mentions of worries about relationship with the perpetrator, others

□ Listening to women in our studies led to the question…How might social/interpersonal environment contribute to risk? To protection?

Harnessing the Power of Friends to Reduce Alcohol-Involved Assault Risk

"The Rape of Europa"

Titian 1559-1562

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Preventing Alcohol-involved Sexual Assault: Responsibility & Relationship.

- Alcohol-involved sexual assault takes place in a social context. Social context incorporated into intervention efforts ("Bystander Interventions" Banyard et al., 2007; Gidycz et al., 2011; Katz & Moore, 2013).

- Informed by seminal work by Latané and Darley (1970) which delineates 5 steps that lead a bystander to intervene:

  (1) *noticing* the event;

  (2) *interpreting* the event as one that requires action;

  (3) making the *decision* to act;

  (4) *knowing how* to intervene;

  (5) *implementing* intervention.

- "Bystander" interventions typically are offered in group format to general audiences of students who may not socialize or even know one another.
  - Incorporate imaginal vignettes, didactic information, risk cognition & prevention.
  - Some efficacy in changing bystander intentions. Limited evidence in reducing sexual assault (Coker et al 2017).

Friends as Bystanders in SA Intervention

- Literature highlights TWO factors critical to intervention behavior:
  (1) A sense of *personal responsibility* to the potential victim
  (2) a *personal relationship* with her
  - Close personal relationship strongly predicts intervention action (e.g. Benn et & Banyard, 2014).

- <u>Friends</u> are central to the drinking context of college women (Borsari & Carey, 2006) and to the context of sexual assault (Planty, 2002).
- In Latané & Darley's model
  - Friends are in an optimal position to identify risk as it emerges (Step 1).
  - A friend is most likely to realize that action is needed (Step 2).
  - Friends report greater intent to help and greater sense of personal responsibility (Step 3; Katz et al., 2015).
  - As such, friends are most likely to take action (Step 5).

- FRIENDS can play a crucial role in preventing sexual assault.

HOW TO BUILD A FRIEND-BASED INTERVENTION

Pilot Work
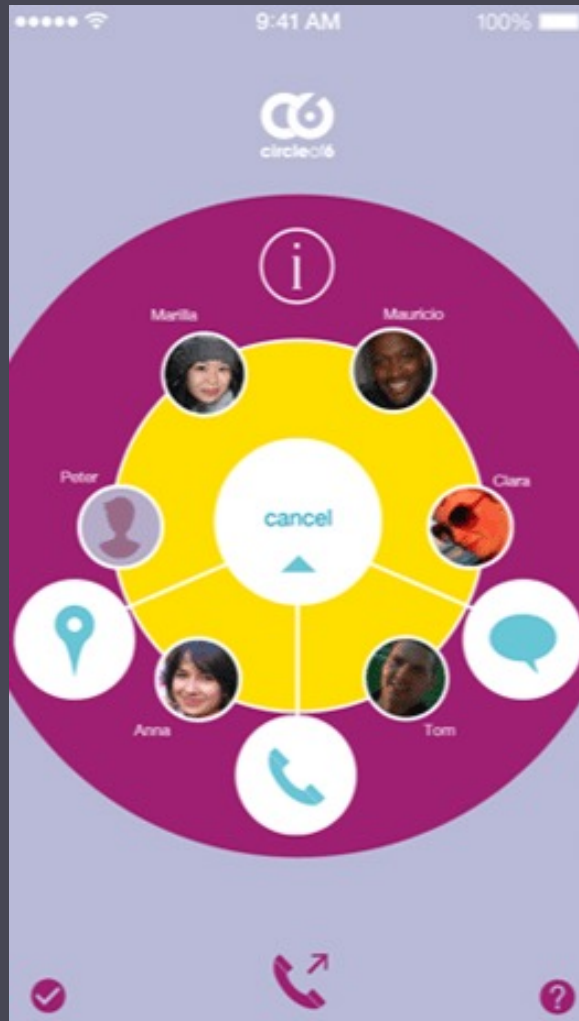
Pilot Work: The social, interpersonal context of Alcohol-Involved Assault Risk

- 68 regularly drinking college women (_M_ age 20.27, _SD_=1.50, range:18-24)
  - 12 focus groups (4-5 women/group)

- Focused on women's perceptions of sexual risk contexts, assault prevention.
  - Perceptions of how friends might be involved in ASA prevention

- Also completed self-report assessments of helping readiness, barriers and benefits to helping, helping self-efficacy, and protective behaviors.

- 2 month follow-up (n=48).
  - Assessed ASA contexts and helping behavior via Timeline Follow-Back

- Content coding of focus groups.
  - Identification and quantification of key themes
  - Descriptive characteristics of attitudes, readiness, benefits and barriers.

Friends & Alcohol-involved Assault Prevention

- High baseline levels of intentions to intervene to prevent ASA
  - Intentions greater for helping friends than helping strangers.
  - At 2 month follow up, nearly 3X more prevention behaviors with friends than strangers

Figure 1. Baseline Intentions to Help Friends vs. Strangers   Figure 2. Follow -Up Intentions to Help Friends vs Strangers

Blayney, Jenzer, Livingston, Testa & Read, 2018
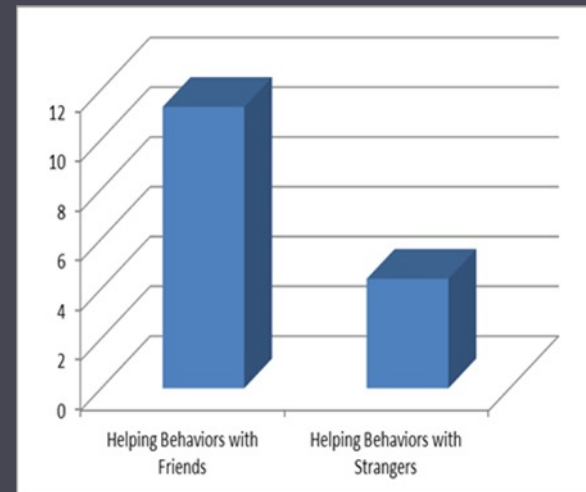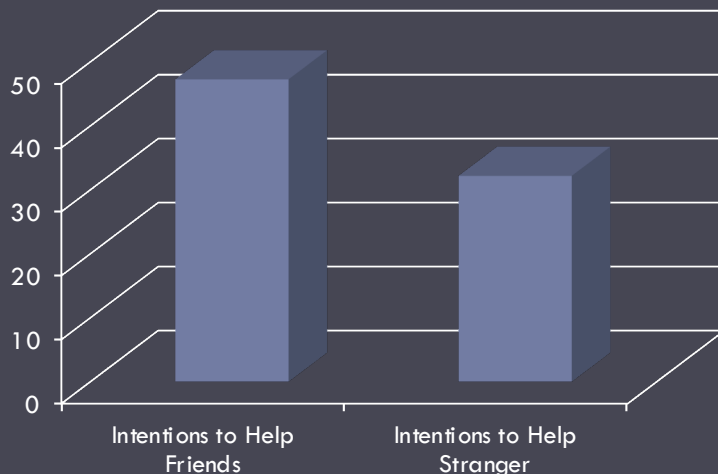
Friends & Alcohol-involved Assault Prevention

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- Women reported a sense of personal responsibility for the safety and well-being of their friends:

    - *"… it's like…'you're kind of in charge of my safety and I'm in charge of your safety'… if it's five of us, all of us are responsible for making sure that all five of us are leaving wherever we came, and that everyone is safe."*

Helping behavior: Barriers & Benefits

However, women also perceive barriers to preventive action.

□ Approximately equal number of barriers to benefits

Perceived Barriers vs. Benefits of ASA Intervention
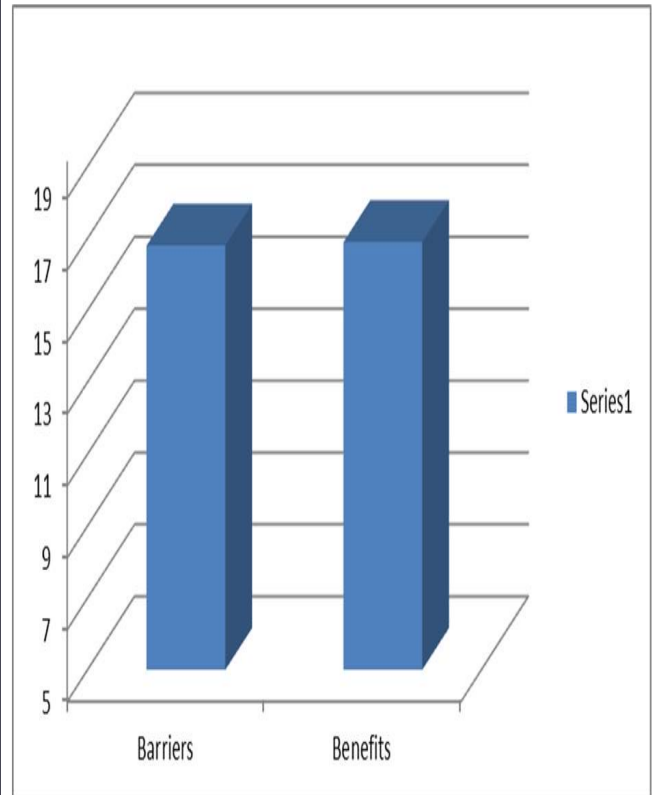
Challenges to helping behavior: Barriers & Alcohol

Barriers Included

- *Self-efficacy.* regarding whether, when, and how to offer help (Katz & Moore, 2013)
    - Poor self-efficacy in determining need for action endorsed by > 80%.
    - Ambiguity about recognizing potential ASA situations, knowing how to respond, confidence whether to intervene (Pugh et al., 2016).

- *Interpersonal concerns*. How will others respond to help efforts? Will such efforts damage the relationship?
    - Among the strongest reasons given for failure to engage in peer-based intervention behavior (Armstrong et al., 2014; Bennett et al., 2014).
    - Reported by 40% of women as a major barrier to preventive action.

- *Skills.* Lacking specific, behavioral *skills* for ASA intervention.

- *Alcohol* As intoxication increases, intervention likelihood decreases (Leone et al., 2017; 2018; Testa et al., 2014).
    - Identified in focus groups among the most common factors compromising women's ability to recognize ASA risk, or to act on a friend's behalf to avert assault.

Addressing Critical Challenges: Friend-based MI

- Relationship, responsibility found in friendship.
- Pilot work, extant literature highlight important but resolvable barriers to friend-based intervention.
  - Can be well addressed within an MI framework
  - Grounded in Bystander Intervention

Motivational Interviewing

- *MI is a **guiding** style of communication, that involves both good listening and giving information and advice.*

- *MI is designed to **empower** people to change by drawing out their own meaning, importance and capacity for change.*

- *MI is based on a **respectful** and **curious** way of being with people that facilitates the natural process of change and honors client autonomy.*

(Miller & Rollnick, 2013) Text taken from MINT website
https://motivationalinterviewing.org/understanding-motivational-interviewing

Development of a Friend-Based Motivational Interviewing Intervention (FMI)

- R34 Treatment Development grant to develop Friend-based Motivational Intervention (FMI) to motivate and prepare women to work together to reduce ASA risk.

  - Target ways that the friend dyad may support, encourage, and share responsibility for protecting against SA.

  - Focus on the identification and implementation of idiosyncratic prevention **skills**.

  - Includes the ways drinking may impede helping efforts.
    - Identify specific strategies for reducing the effects of alcohol on helping.

Development of a Friend-Based Motivational Interviewing Intervention (FMI)

☐ Development occurs across 3 stages:

- Intervention Development & Focus Group Feedback

- Open Trial and short-term (1 month) follow up (N=10 friend pairs)

- Randomized controlled trial (N=48 friend pairs) and 3 month follow-up
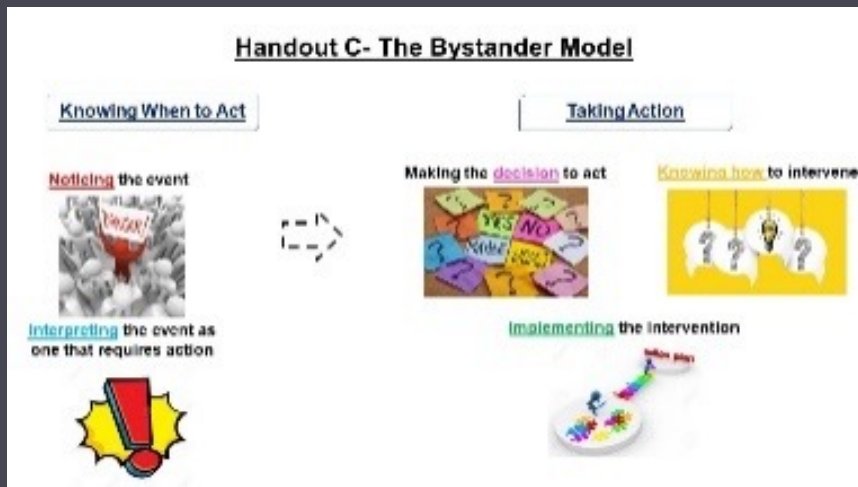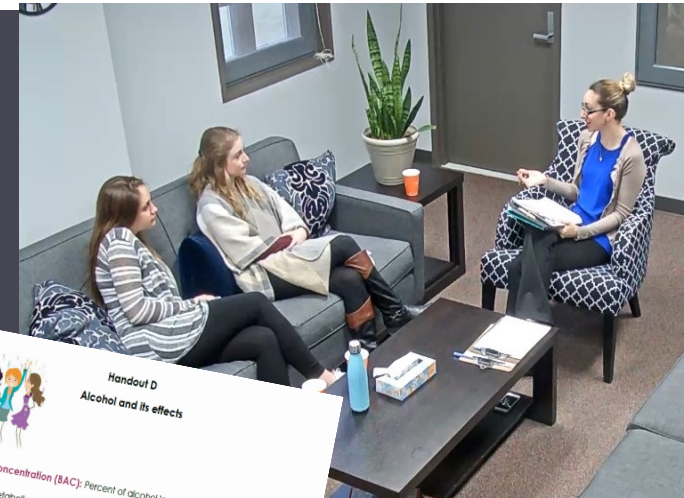
PAIRS Project: Protecting Allies in Risky Situations

Phase 1

☐ Protecting Allies in Risky Situations (PAIRS)

- 90 Minute intervention
- Discussion about social context of friend pair
- Consideration of personal risk situations
- Information about risk, protection

Phase 1: Focus Groups

- Focus groups (N=8), college women (N=36)
  - M age = 19.68 years (SD = 0.58)
  - 72% White, 17% Asian, 6% Black
  - Reviewed mock intervention, and provided feedback.
  - Transcripts reviewed for key themes.

Phase I Findings

☐ Findings:

▫ Feedback from FG women was overwhelmingly positive.

▫ Saw intervention as personally relevant, valuable, resonated to friend message.

▫ MI format felt natural, comfortable

I think a lot of girls do at least some of this process naturally… they just need more of the honing of skills and information because people already do it without this intervention just not at the best optimum level

"naturally found out a lot about their friendship, and it seemed very natural"

Phase I: Qualitative Analysis of Focus Group Interviews

Guiding Questions:

- What are women's perceptions of the role of friendship in the prevention of sexual assault?

- How, if at all, does alcohol intoxication affect women's abilities to keep themselves and their friends safe from sexual assault?

- What are women's perceptions of the FMI prototype?

Role of Friends in Prevention of Sexual Assault

- Themes reiterated Blayney et al. (2020) findings
- Friends feel responsible for keeping each other safe:

"It's really engrained as girls that we need to look out for ourselves and we need to look out for each other…"

"I'm always like scanning the room making sure I can see my friends, knowing where they are, and if I can't find them I'll like check my phone, see where they are, and if we're still in the same house I'll go find them."

Role of Friends in Prevention of Sexual Assault

- Friendship makes it easier to notice and interpret situation as one in which assistance is needed:

> *"It's definitely easier to decide if that's your friend like, I know if my friend is over there talking to some guy and she had some kind of body language, and you know like how they act so if they're acting suspiciously then you would have more of an inclination to go in and help rather than with a stranger."*

Role of Friends in Prevention of Sexual Assault

□ Friendship also makes it easier to decide to act:

"If it were you and a stranger that you don't know just because you don't know how your actions would affect them…you kind of stop and go "Am I actually helping them or am I not? Is this what they want?"

"She knows her friend wouldn't be angry at her if they were trying to help out if they got the situation wrong."

Role of Alcohol in Protecting One Another from Sexual Assault

☐ Alcohol interferes with keeping oneself and one's friends safe.

> *"Alcohol 100% inhibits our ability to help each other because I'll be like, 'dude I was so drunk I didn't know where you were!'"*

…one girl in my sorority was making out with a guy in the corner…but she was really intoxicated and I'm like "are you okay" and I'm pulling her aside, but even I didn't even trust myself enough because I was drunk and she was telling me that she's fine. But I was like I don't think you're fine. I think if I was sober, I'd know you weren't fine, so yeah alcohol just makes things weird when you're checking up on people.

Role of Alcohol in Protecting One Another from Sexual Assault

- Liquid courage

When I get drunk, I get a little bit more confrontational… I'm not at all shy even when its strangers and I think that they're in a bad situation, I'm gonna go up to them and be like "hey, are you okay?" .

Receptivity to FMI Program

□ Positives

◻ Emphasis on friendship

◻ Reinforces protective behaviors

◻ Increased communication, planning, accountability

◻ Customizable

"And because like you're doing it with a friend like you both are on the same page on the same strategies and I feel like you guys can hold each other to it a little more."

I also think that basically every point …was things that they came up with on their own so it wasn't them being told "this is what you should do". …kind of letting them choose what is important to them and in their life so it's more relevant to them like things that they would actually do as opposed to things they're just being told to do.

Receptivity to FMI Program

- Concerns/Criticisms
  - Perception that change is not needed
  - More guidance on how to safely intervene is needed
  - Unfair/Blaming

"Looking at the model I could see how that could help someone but like when you're looking at the situation you don't know what to do."

It's kind of frustrating… I shouldn't have to make sure my friends are okay, I should just trust that people aren't going to suck. I want to go out and have a good night. I don't want to have to worry, but I will.
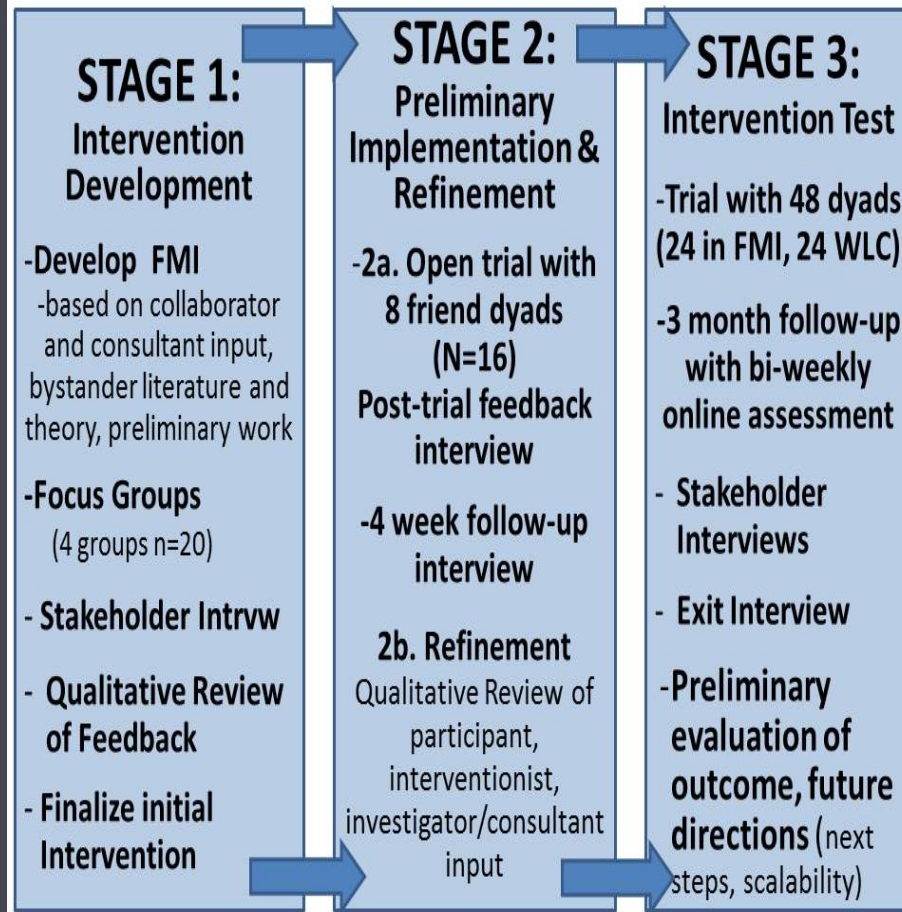
BUT DOES IT WORK?

Preliminary Data from our Open Trial

Open Trial Data

Figure 1. Three Stage Intervention Development Plan

STAGE 1: Intervention Development

- Develop FMI
  - based on collaborator and consultant input, bystander literature and theory, preliminary work
- Focus Groups
  - (4 groups n=20)
- Stakeholder Intrvw
- Qualitative Review of Feedback
- Finalize initial Intervention

STAGE 2: Preliminary Implementation & Refinement

- 2a. Open trial with 8 friend dyads (N=16) Post-trial feedback interview
- 4 week follow-up interview

2b. Refinement
Qualitative Review of participant, interventionist, investigator/consultant input

STAGE 3: Intervention Test

- Trial with 48 dyads (24 in FMI, 24 WLC)
- 3 month follow-up with bi-weekly online assessment
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Exit Interview
- Preliminary evaluation of outcome, future directions (next steps, scalability)

- 10 (N=20 women) Dyads
  - Regular, heavy drinking (both)
  - Friend who they go out with at least 1X weekly
- Interviews immediately post-intervention
- 1 Month follow-up
- Examination of qualitative, Quantitative data
  - Feasibility
  - Acceptability
  - Relationship Impacts
  - Behavior Change
- Final revision before RCT

Phase 2 FMI Open Trial
& 1 Month Follow-Up

- 10 Friend Dyads Age
  - Mean = 19.60, SD = 1.10
- Race
  - 10 Asian, 8 White, 2 Mixed Race
- School Year
  - 13 Juniors, 3 Sophomores, 2 Freshmen, 1 Senior
- Baseline Typical Drinks in a Week
  - Mean = 19.60, SD = 6.15
- Relationship Closeness (0-4 scale)
 - Mean = 3.36, SD = 0.35

PAIRS Phase 2: Qualitative Responses to FMI Intervention

- Transcribed 1-month Interviews coded by 3 investigators. Themes derived are described below:
- PAIRS FMI is empowering
  - Not blaming
- Positive program features:
  - Proactive
  - Customizable
  - Empowering
  - Capitalizes on friendship
- Benefits of participation:
  - Reinforces protective behaviors already in use
  - Improves communication/accountability
  - Skills are generalizable beyond dyad
  - Facilitates New Learning
  - Encourages Reflection

Livingston et al., 2021

"It's definitely easier if that's your friend ...I know if my friend is over there... since you are their friend you know their body language and how they act so then you would have more of an inclination to go in and help"

"I feel like talking about those situations makes you kind of analyze what you could do differently naturally so it kind of led into what could you do differently."

Phase 2 Outcomes: Readiness to Change, Friend-Based Protective Behaviors
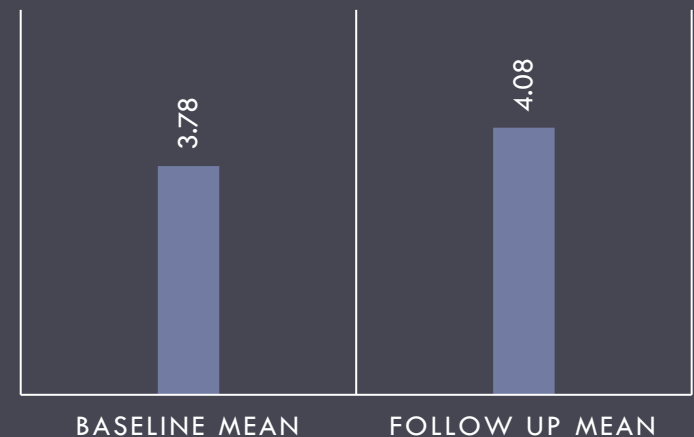
Baseline to 1 Month Follow Up: Readiness to Change
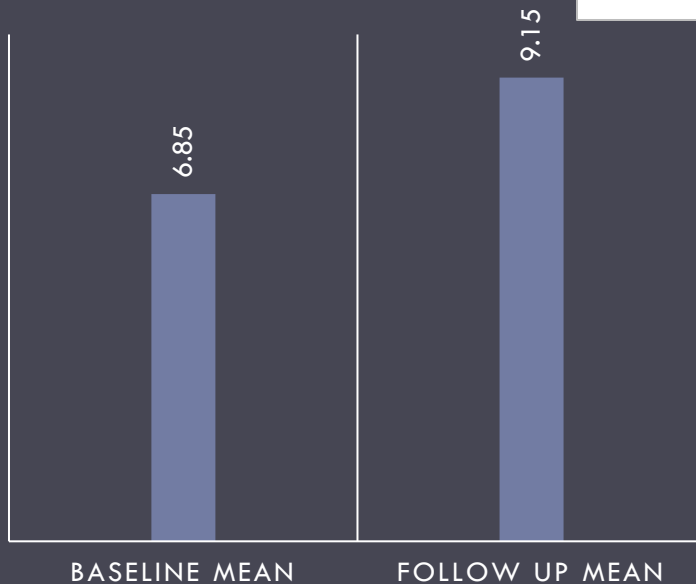
Baseline to 1 Month Follow Up: Friend-Based Protective Behaviors

READINESS LADDER

p < .05

BASELINE MEAN — 6.85

FOLLOW UP MEAN — 9.15

FRIEND-BASED PROTECTIVE STRATEGIES

p < .05

BASELINE MEAN — 3.78

FOLLOW UP MEAN — 4.08

Phase 2 Outcomes (cont): Bystander Intervention, Barriers to Intervening
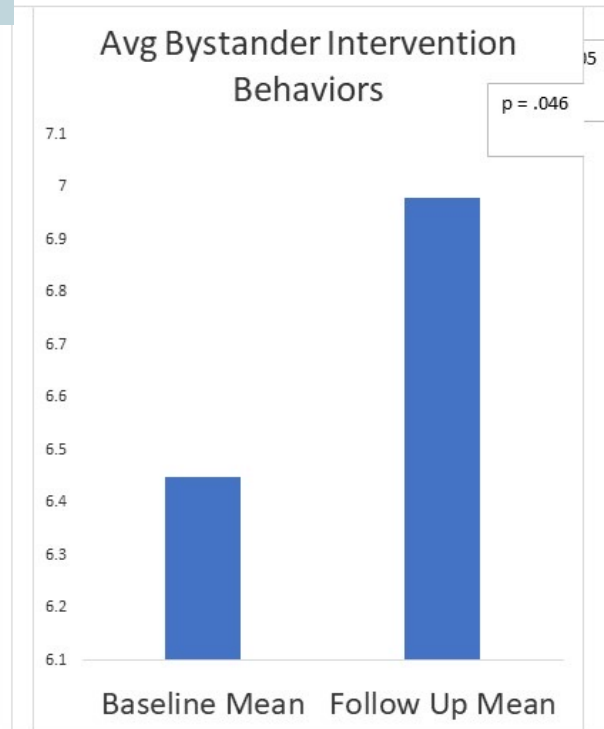
Figure 2: FMI Outcomes
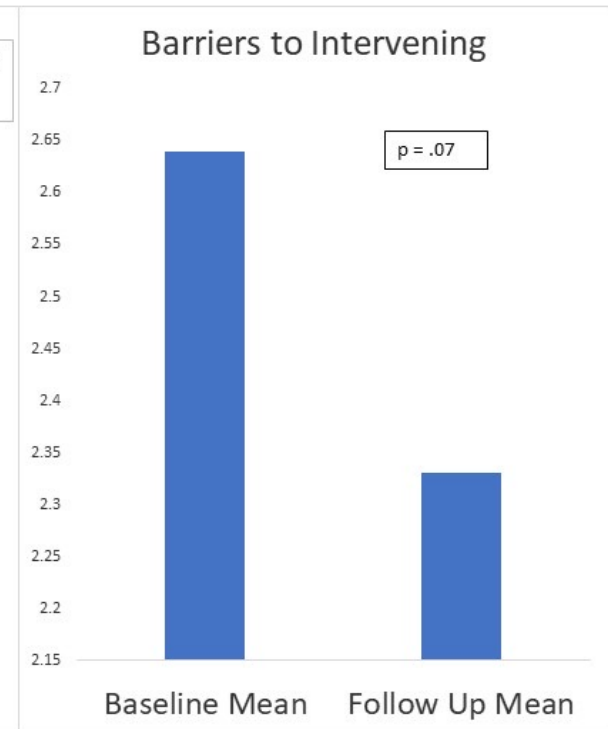
OVERALL SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- The peer/social context is critical driver of alcohol-related risk.
    - Friends are an important part of this environment
    - Friends are a natural target for bystander-based intervention
    - Preliminary data suggest friend-based intervention is;
        - Feasible
        - Well-received
        - effective

- Exploring ways that women can work together toward self/other protection may be key to reducing risk for sexual assault.

Next Steps:

- Developing R01 application to test PAIRS FMI on larger scale
  - Focus on implementation science
  - Also individual-level moderators (e.g., race)
  - Mechanisms of change
- Other populations for PAIRS?
  - Military?
    - Currently working with colleagues (Orchowski, Walters) to develop PAIRS for a military setting
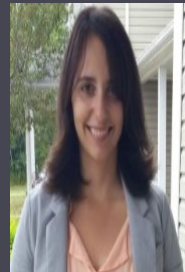
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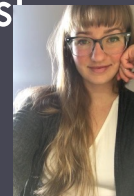
  PLUS a team of great undergraduate RAs!

- Collaborators/Co-Authors
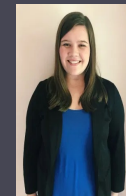 - Craig R. Colder, Ph.D. (UB)
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Thank you!

Questions?